HUMAN EVENTS

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News Section

Printed in Two Sections

The Rosy Dreams of Mr. Truman: Republicans correctly consider ex-President Truman as an asset to them in the developing political campaign. His unpopularity in the 1950-52 era reached the stage of a real country-wide revulsion and "Trumanism" became the arch-villain on the hustings. There is no reason to believe that this revulsion has entirely subsided. But, Republicans actually "don't know the half of it"; they do not realize the height to which the vanity and hopes of the little figure from Independence have risen.

Very private reports reaching HUMAN EVENTS reveal some surprising aspects of Truman's characteristically uninhibited conversations with his intimates and sycophants. Every afternoon — we gather — Truman (wherever he may happen to be) holds court and gives forth. We offer the following as samples of what he says:

Harry expresses a strong preference for Harriman, but thinks he has no chance. His attitude towards Kefauver has been softened — though not enough to win his support — by the continuous stream of flattery that flows from Estes, who realizes that Truman's hostility wrecked his chances in 1952. Stevenson — picked in 1952 by Truman as a means of stopping the hated Kefauver — lost four years ago because he refused to take Truman's advice and "give 'em hell." Worst of all — and this, to Truman, is unforgivable — Adlai shows no signs of having learned anything from his '52 failure.

At this point in the conversation, one of the ex-President's fans in the circle can be depended upon to say: "You should be our candidate in '56, Mr. President; you're the only one who can win." Harry immediately beams approval, modestly disclaims interest in another Presidential term and then explains that it would be a great deal easier to beat Ike in '56 than it was to beat Dewey in '48 — if only the same kind of campaign were put on.

Believe it or not — Truman leaves his listeners with the feeling that he expects the convention to be deadlocked and himself to be drafted, after which he would go on to perform the miracle of "beating the most popular President since James Monroe." (The anti-third term 22nd Amendment, passed during Truman's second term, excludes Truman from its prohibition: "this article shall not apply to any President holding the office of President when this amendment was proposed by the Congress.")

That Vicious Veto: Up on Capitol Hill, veteran observers are shaking their heads over what they believe will be the bitter results of the President's veto of the natural gas bill. Traditionally, vetoes as a rule produce bad feeling between the legislative and executive branches. But this negative stroke of the Presidential pen has really made congressional blood pressures soar. The Democratic leaders are mad, because they (both Texans) strongly favored the measure. The GOP leaders are no less unhappy because originally they received promise of support from the White House for the bill — and pushed it in the Senate on that basis.

The fact is that the gas veto has badly impaired the good relationship which has existed between Congress and the White House since Ike entered office. For — as members of Congress see it — the veto casts a reflection on the integrity of every member who voted for the bill.

This is the way many in Congress see it: It is a rule in American election contests when fraud or bribery is charged and proved, that the apparent election result will not be voided unless the number of votes illegally cast, or not counted, would change the result. That is, the number of such votes must exceed the majority or plurality of the

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apparent winner. If this were not the rule, few certificates of election would be valid, as there are always charges of "graveyard voting" or ballot stealing. So, election boards follow this rule. Viewed in this light, the President's veto of the gas bill is fantastic.

Obviously, since Senator Case returned the money and voted against the bill, no vote was bought, so far as it is now proved. In the final vote, all Senators were asked whether any other Senator had been similarly approached. No one had been. The bill passed by a majority of 15.

But with a vote of 53 to 38, the reasons given by the President for his veto would be valid only on proof or strong suspicion that "highly questionable activities" had influenced at least 15 Senators from among the 53 to vote for the bill. Logically, therefore, the veto should put a serious question mark behind the names of 15 Senators. But, because no 15 can be separated from the other 53 that produced the majority, the veto actually puts a question mark behind the names of all 53 Senators who voted for the bill after the Case incident became known to the public.

This — say members of Congress — is "guilt by association," with a vengeance. Not one illegal or improper vote has so far been proved. Nevertheless, the bill is vetoed, not on its merits but as a result of newspaper headlines. One Congressional wit put it, "If this be the logic in matters of this sort, a new way to influence votes has been discovered — bribery by reverse English. You simply offer money to a legislator who favors a bill you are against and then see to it that the news leaks out!"

The result of all this is that every member of the House and Senate who voted for the bill and is a candidate for re-election next fall, will be attacked unfairly in the forthcoming primary and general election campaigns. It is doubtful if any occupant of the White House has ever put Congress in such a position before the public.

Not Merely Gossip: What will the lobby investigation, set up as a select committee on a bipartisan basis, accomplish in the next few months? Idealists claim it will unbare the facts of money influence on elections and legislation. Cynics say, "we have heard this before."

Liberals affirm that the select committee will uncover the facts about business lobbyists. Conservative Senator Styles Bridges maintains that it will have to go into lobbying by labor and such leftish organizations as the Committee for an Effective Congress which did so much to smear Senator McCarthy. Certainly, facts such as the $32,450 spent by the CIO-AFL in Montana's 1954 senatorial election — a huge sum in that small-population state — have shocked the Capital. The probe, judging by promises to look into such matters, is off to a good start.

However, old Capitol hands express doubts. Assuming that "liberals" and conservative members will be equally balanced on the body, the most likely outcome may well be a stalemate. Neither Big Business nor Big Labor will be really grilled — so this hard-boiled prophecy runs — and the only result will be a few revelations about some comparatively unimportant organization or individual. Today, cynics are asking: "Who will be chosen as the scapegoat?"

● There are persistent rumors that large local "public service" companies actually spent more than the natural gas interests in lobbying activities connected with the vetoed gas bill. According to one story, a fee running into six figures was paid to a prominent member of the eastern, "liberal" wing of the GOP to exert his influence on those who advised Ike to veto the bill.

● Dulles is "in bad" with both Democratic and Republican leaders in Congress. "He's running all over the world and doesn't stay at home and attend to his knitting." Real truth is: the New Deal holdover bureaucracy in the State Department inspires Dulles to do this, playing on his vanity, for he likes to strut at conferences abroad. The holdover boys want to keep the Secretary out of Washington, so they can run things themselves.

Bricker Amendment: On the last day of this month — the same day as, it is believed, the President will clearly announce his plans for running or not running — a new version of the Bricker Amendment will be launched by the Senate Judiciary Committee for another legislative fray this session on that controversial measure. The new version — approved by Frank Holman,

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past president of the American Bar Association — is said to be more likely to blunt criticism from opponents, while still remaining a "strong text," from the standpoint of the old Bricker Amendment partisans. This new version is in the hands of friendly members of the Senate Judiciary Committee and they will — it is anticipated — get the amendment "reported out" the end of the month.

From there on — the fireworks.

Foreign Aid: Representative Lawrence Smith (R., Wis.), prominent member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, startled Congress by revealing that the urban residents of his congressional district in Wisconsin would presumably have to pay about $6,687,210 as their share of the proposed $4.9 billion foreign aid bill now before Congress. Mr. Smith says that this is figured on a $30 per person basis. The basis is obtained by dividing the total population of the country into the aid figure. At $30 per person, the 222,907 urban residents in his district would have to pay $6,687,210 as their share.

Congressman Smith further illustrates his point by noting other communities in his district and their shares. For instance, the largest city is Racine, population 71,193; its share would be $2,135,790. One small community, Rochester (population 333) would have to pay a total of $9,990. Referring to these spending programs, Smith concludes that "their only achievement" can be "the draining of the resources of the peoples from our towns, cities and farms. These monies are hard-earned and should not be siphoned away from the taxpayers and poured upon the turbulent international waters with questionable results."

Diplomatic Snafu: The State Department's on-again-off-again fiasco on the tanks-to-Saudi Arabia deal, not only is providing Democrats with a field day of criticism, it is doing the same thing for the Communists. Although its logic does not stand up under close scrutiny, the *Daily Worker*, mouthpiece of our home-grown Reds and transmitter of the Moscow Party line, leaps on this one with alacrity and glee.

Completely disregarding the fact that the tanks were bought and paid for by Saudi Arabia last summer in full conformity with the 1951 arms agreement, the *Daily Worker* trumpets editorially: "The ink was hardly dry on the Eden-Eisenhower Declaration, when the decision was secretly made by the State Department to send the tanks to Saudi Arabia."

Then, recalling that the British seized the Buraimi oasis and its potential oil deposits last summer, it says the tank shipment "is a clear indication that American oil companies" are trying to get that field for themselves.

"It is plain as day," says the *Daily Worker*, "that the arms race in the Middle East originated from the efforts of the oil trusts here and in Britain to control the liquid black gold. And it was stimulated by the efforts to build a Middle East military bloc directed against the Soviet Union — the Baghdad Pact. Now the hypocrisy of the outcry against the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia can be seen for what it was worth."

The blatant distortions of the Red propaganda line, as evidenced by this and other mouthings of the *Daily Worker*, do not, of course, in any way mitigate the fact that the handling of the tank deal was a fiasco — a fiasco which can hardly have had any effect but to alienate the Arab world a bit further from the West. Nobody, in fact, can be pleased with the way the affair was handled — nobody except the Communists.

Letter from JUDGE FRANK A. MATHEWS, JR., former Member of Congress, New Jersey: "HUMAN EVENTS is a refreshing and needed reminder that we must keep the United States of America a self-governing nation of free individuals and never let it degenerate into just a large mass of people completely surrounded by government."

Meany-Reuther: In December, a few days after he was elected president of the merged AFL-CIO, George Meany vigorously denounced India's Premier Nehru as an "aide and ally of Communism." Now the second-in-command of the AFL-CIO, former CIO President Walter Reuther, is preparing for a "good will" trip to India as representative of America's newly-unified House of Labor.

The incident, of course, has nothing whatsoever to do with the basic, primary purposes of labor unions — improving the lot of union members. But it is significantly typical of the sharply divergent viewpoints of Meany and Reuther on many

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important issues. It is one of several 1956 incidents serving to bring these differing views into the open, and bolstering the belief of many observers that the one-two relationship between Meany and Reuther in the AFL-CIO cannot long survive.

For example, consider their ideological views: Meany is a strong anti-Communist, widely regarded as a supporter of free enterprise even though he vigorously advocates many welfare-state legislative programs generally sought by unions. Reuther, having flirted seriously with Communism in his younger days, now professes to be anti-Communist but, like Nehru, has his own peculiar ideas of how Communism should be fought and is personally socialistic in his policies.

The invitation to Reuther was extended through the same Indian National Trades Union Congress which bitterly attacked Meany for his comment about their Pandit-Premier. U.S. Ambassador to India, John Sherman Cooper, ultra-internationalist and former GOP Senator from Kentucky, strongly recommended acceptance of the invitation and the State Department played the same tune. Washington observers fear that if the Auto Workers' chieftain launches off on any typically Reutheresque tangent while in India, he may do more harm than good. Official hopes, that he may counteract some of the seeds of anti-Americanism strewn through India by the Bulganin-Khruschev entourage, are regarded as totally-unwarranted wishful thinking.

Judicial Tangents: Another case involving an ultra-liberal Federal Court decision in the District of Columbia apparently is headed for the Supreme Court, but only after the Court of Appeals for the District reconsiders its own ruling. This one involves the tribunal's 2-to-1 decision last month reversing the conviction of a labor union organizer on contempt of Congress charges, for refusing to answer questions about whether he knew various individuals as Communists.

Last month's decision held that the questions were asked solely for the sake of "exposure" of the individuals, and had no legitimate legislative purpose. The lone dissenter, Judge Walter M. Bastian, contended that the ruling was an "interference with the legislative prerogatives" of Congress and set up the Court as "a court of appeals over the Congress and its Committees."

Now, on motion of the government, the D. C. Court of Appeals has vacated its own decision and agreed to reconsider the case *en banc* — that is, with all its eight members sitting as a single court. The procedure is unusual but is brought into play on occasion when the Court feels that a case presents unusual and important questions.

In this case, the January decision was regarded as bordering on a death knell, if allowed to stand, for congressional efforts to maintain a check on the machinations of the Communist conspiracy. For example, the day after the Court of Appeals agreed to reconsider the case, two witnesses before the House Un-American Activities Committee refused to answer any questions about their own Communist connections, past or present, or about Red associates; one of the reasons they cited was the contention that the questions served no legitimate legislative purpose.

HUMAN EVENTS told last week of at least a momentary reversal of the judicial trend in Washington (whose lower Federal courts probably are more important than those of any other judicial district, because they adjudicate so many cases involving the Government) toward compelling virtually unrestricted issuance of passports. The same Court of Appeals now has before it two diametrically opposite passport decisions, one saying the State Department cannot weigh confidential information in acting on passport applications, the other saying it can.

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The Declaration of Independence opens: "When in the course of HUMAN EVENTS . . ."

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Article Section

INNOCENTS ABROAD IN RED RUSSIA

By EUGENE LYONS

SINCE Moscow opened up a bit on visas, public opinion here has been subjected to a running fire of quick impressions and *obiter dicta* on matters Soviet by three- and four-week experts. It is not necessarily a reflection on their honesty or intelligence to note the obvious fact that the hurry-up analysts are merely adding dimensions of confusion to the image of Soviet Russia in the American mind.

It is part of the American credo that a personal visit to a distant land entitles the traveler to pronounce judgment on its people, conditions and institutions — no matter how brief the sojourn, how vast the country, how complex its civilization, or how ill-prepared the pilgrim may have been to understand what he saw. This can be deeply mischievous when the object of inspection is a totalitarian nation like Soviet Russia, where concealment of the truth and the gulling of foreigners are prime arts of statecraft.

College youngsters, having spent a few weeks in the USSR, are solemnly interviewed upon their return about what's what and why in that country. Men and women who would be hard put to it to estimate the mood of their home towns do not hesitate, after a spell of sightseeing, to tell us exactly how the 200 million Soviet people feel about their dictatorship.

Last fall Senator George W. Malone of Nevada, on the ninth day of his Soviet visit, informed us that he found "no evidence the people are going to rise against the Soviet regime." Had there been such evidence, short of street riots and barricades, it is scarcely likely that Mr. Malone would have found it.

Another Senator, John J. Sparkman of Alabama, detected an "evolutionary process" in Russia which made him hopeful. Among the symptoms of this process he cited, according to the press, the persistence of religion, the "prevalence of individualism in the peasants" and deviations from Marxism by the rulers.

Had Mr. Sparkman made the journey ten or twenty years ago, he could have noted the very same symptoms. He could, indeed, have learned about them without going to Russia by reading any tolerably unbiased book on the subject. Because he failed to do his homework, he mistook unchanging facts for evidence of change pointing to an evolution.

In the 1930's, the typical tourist fresh from the land of Soviets used to report that he had found "progress" and "improvement;" and that despite wretchedness and "sacrifices" the people supported or loved the Soviet system. Today, twenty years

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later, we are given approximately the same reports in almost the same words. If all the "progress" discerned by all the travelers in all these years were true, Soviet Russia would by now have outstripped the Garden of Eden. Yet its people are still pitifully poor, plagued by goods' shortages and under police terror. Clearly, tourist findings — even when the tourists are well-known reporters—leave much to be desired.

The present flow of foreign visitors is a meager trickle compared to the tourist tides that inundated Russia until about 1936. To raise hard currency for its initial five-year plans, the Kremlin had opened wide its gates to foreigners. In tens of thousands, they swarmed over the long-suffering land, notebooks and cameras in hand, then returned home to unload their cargoes of statistics and opinions. Now that the phenomenon is repeating itself, it is useful to recall the earlier installment, as a warning against taking too seriously the current crop of eye-witnesses.

THE WHOLE WORLD knows now that the early 30's were a period of grim events and piled-up horrors, the flowering of Stalin's "iron age." They were a time of mass purges and executions, the liquidation of entire classes of the population, the mushrooming of the slave-labor system. But little, if any, of this reality was reflected in the tourist testimony. On the contrary, it merely fed the stupefied, know-nothing admiration of everything Soviet which was then the fashion.

The grim winter of 1932-33 provided a laboratory demonstration of the futility of "personal observation" under totalitarian handicaps. A terrible famine was then raging, killing off millions. To prevent them from seeing the tragedy, foreign correspondents were strictly confined to Moscow. Officially concealed at the time and cynically "denied" by the Kremlin's friends, the famine is by now an accepted historical fact.

But thousands of tourists passed through the tortured country that winter without becoming aware of the great catastrophe. Such was Moscow's confidence in their blindness and helplessness that it even permitted a good many to visit Kharkov, Kiev and other cities in the heart of the disaster areas.

The standard tourist report in the 30's was that the terror had ended and that nearly perfect accord had been reached between the regime and its subjects. "There is stability in contemporary Russia and there is solidarity," the late Dr. Eduard C. Lindeman informed the *New Republic.* "Revolutionary vigilance tends to relax in all spheres because there is no longer any real danger of counterrevolutionary movements from within." Scores of other personal observers played variations on this theme.

But Russia in truth was on the threshold of its most luridly violent period, the blood purges of 1936-38 that took tens of thousands of lives and swelled the slave-labor hordes by millions. Soon, moreover, the German attack revealed the great gulf that yawned between the regime and the people. Millions of soldiers surrendered without real resistance; nearly everywhere the invaders were met joyously as liberators and the Kremlin had to drop its Communist slogans and boasts in favor of old-fashioned

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patriotic appeals. Only the political idiocy of the Hitlerites, it is probable, averted what amounted to a rebellion against the regime.

THERE IS AS YET no reason for supposing that the present contingents of tourists, junketeers and one-shot journalists will produce judgments any more trustworthy than their predecessors did. On reaching Russia, they find life going on normally in the calm, characteristic of a policed population. Children play and laugh, lovers neck on park benches, the movies are crowded, plain folk are engrossed in personal affairs and no one talks politics. The seamy side of the system is, of course, invisible to the naked eye; and fear promotes a protective display of enthusiasm for the *status quo*. So, with a clear conscience and a sense of discovery, the visitors hasten home to announce "great improvement" and to attest the eternal stability of the regime.

I have space for only one sample: Recently Mr. Stewart Alsop, in two articles in the *Saturday Evening Post,* recorded his unhappy but inescapable conclusion that "the smug, smug Russians" are not only reconciled to the Soviet way of life but "really think their system is superior." They believe they have left capitalist nations far behind in standards of living. "The Soviet workers do not know they are being ruthlessly exploited" — he is "sure that this is true" — and "the Soviet citizen has been sucessfully taught to love his chains, or at least to be unaware that he is wearing chains."

This view, it happens, has been par for the course for nearly four decades: the routine impression gathered in naive honesty by newcomers. Only those who remained in Russia long enough to penetrate the surface and to win the trust of their Soviet neighbors realized how silly their first impressions had been. Usually they emerged to write series of articles and books in a quite different vein. The great majority of long-term foreign correspondents pass through these "before" and "after" phases. Alsop has simply written the regulation "before" pieces.

When young Russian sailors now in this country (from the batch who deserted a Soviet ship in Formosa) were told about the *Post* articles, they greeted them with derision. Russians love their chains, indeed! "If the Kremlin allowed people to go out," one of the boys said, "you'd soon find out how they felt about the regime!"

It is not easy to explain why, if Alsop is right, an attempt to leave the country should be a capital crime; why the Soviets maintain the largest political-police establishment in history; why the Kremlin needs a million trained agitators to "sell" its system to a population "already sold" on it; why there are still some 15 million political prisoners whose average age is under 30.

The principal exhibit in the Alsop articles is a tour he made of a factory in Dnepropetrovsk in the company of three Soviet citizens — his interpreter-guide, the town's "local propaganda expert" and the factory manager. They were all boastful, skeptical about claims that America too has the things to which they pointed with pride, and in general "unbearably, infuriatingly smug." Workers whom he questioned responded in the same spirit.

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For those of us long familiar with such a scene, it is at once hilarious and pathetic. What he did not grasp is that by the end of the day, the local police would have three reports on the proceedings — that each of his Soviet companions was talking for the benefit of the other two. Their every smile and wink and boast was for the dreaded record. Had any of these men hated his Soviet fate, he would have made a particular show of enthusiasm and loyalty to ward off suspicion.

In my own experience, the Russians who seemed most smugly pro-Soviet on first acquaintance often turned out to be the most hostile to the regime when years of friendship enabled us to talk frankly. Why casual tourists, especially journalists, should expect any sane Soviet citizen to expose his real sentiments is beyond logic.

THE SITUATION cries for a guidebook for American innocents abroad in Red Russia. It would begin, of course, by cautioning them against "Potiomkin villages" — scenes deliberately stage-set to fool foreigners. The classic case is that of Henry A. Wallace. Visiting Siberia when he was Vice President, he was hoaxed into mistaking the Magadan slave-labor region for a "pioneering" area like our own West. Years after the event, he had the decency to admit publicly that he was gulled to a fare-thee-well; Owen Lattimore, who was with Wallace on that trip has not yet gotten around to acknowledging the deception.

But Potiomkin villages are the least of the hazards. More important is the fact that no Soviet citizen in his senses will dare hint at his real state of mind in the presence of another, even his own wife or child. He knows that talking to a stranger on "dangerous" topics is the shortest road to purge even if he says the "proper" things.

The guidebook would recommend, above all, that the prospective tourists do some homework. There is by this time a large body of authoritative books, memoirs, analyses of the USSR by long-term residents, knowledgeable Soviet escapees and reputable scholars. A week or two in the library might save them from reporting as "new looks" and Columbus-like discoveries, familiar surface facts which have little if any relevance to the core of Communism in practice.

It would also recommend a measure of humility. Complicated questions like the relations between a police-state and its subjects are not answered as offhandedly as Mr. Alsop supposes. The "truth" about any great nation, let alone a totalitarian country after nearly 40 years of Communist rule, cannot be bought with a hurry-up tour.

Additional copies of this 4-page Article: single copy 20¢ (coins, not stamps); 10 copies $1; 25 copies $2; 100 copies $5; 500 copies $20; 1,000 copies $30. In 5,000 lots $20 per thousand.

Eugene Lyons is the author of *The Red Decade* and other books on Communism. Former editor of the *American Mercury,* he is at present a senior editor of the *Reader's Digest.* He has contributed many articles to HUMAN EVENTS. His last appeared on April 9, 1955 — "The Matusow Affair."

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